

I strongly urge my colleagues to join me in voting in favor of this bipartisan resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 2 of House Resolution 466, further consideration of this motion is postponed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 3094, WORKFORCE DEMOCRACY AND FAIRNESS ACT

Ms. FOXX, from the Committee on Rules (during consideration of H.J. Res. 2), submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 112-291) on the resolution (H. Res. 470) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 3094) to amend the National Labor Relations Act with respect to representation hearings and the timing of elections of labor organizations under that Act, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Brian Pate, one of his secretaries.

AUTHORIZATION OF CONTINUED PRODUCTION OF NAVAL PETROLEUM RESERVES BEYOND APRIL 5, 2012—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 112-73)

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FARENTHOLD) laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred to the Committee on Armed Services and ordered to be printed:

To The Congress of the United States:

Consistent with section 7422(c)(2) of title 10, United States Code, I am informing you of my decision to extend the period of production of the Naval Petroleum Reserves for a period of 3 years from April 5, 2012, the expiration date of the currently authorized period of production.

Attached is a copy of the report investigating continued production of the Reserves, consistent with section 7422(c)(2)(B) of title 10. In light of the findings contained in the report, I certify that continued production from the Naval Petroleum Reserves is in the national interest.

BARACK OBAMA.

THE WHITE HOUSE, November 17, 2011.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate agrees to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendments of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2112) "An Act making consolidated appropriations for the De-

partments of Agriculture, Commerce, Justice, Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2012, and for other purposes."

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PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS HOUR: THE BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity to allow members of the Progressive Caucus to continue this discussion and as well to continue to educate the American public.

It is worth noting that part of the discussion that occurred on the floor of the House is that we have come to this point, if I might say, through a peculiar process. Some might call it hostage-taking, but certainly it is a process that has skewed, if you will, the regular order of this Congress.

This little book, the Constitution of the United States, that can fit into a document of this size, even though it is found in law books and many major large-sized books in the Library of Congress, hopefully convinces the American people of the wisdom of the Founding Fathers. It is noteworthy that they did not include a balanced budget amendment in the first group of amendments called the Bill of Rights. And even as they proceeded, they took the challenge of speaking to any number of issues, the freeing of the slaves in the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments, giving the right to vote finally in the 15th Amendment, suggesting that there should be no obstacles to voting. They went on to the 24th Amendment to indicate that there should be no poll tax, the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote. But never did they feel the necessity to talk about a balanced budget amendment.

The reason, I believe, that they cast their lot on the responsible thinking of Members of Congress is because that is what we are supposed to do. We are supposed to be responsible Members of the United States Congress with no intervening body, no layered approach, no handcuffing of our deliberation. And that's what a balanced budget amendment is all about.

You've just listened to a portion of our debate. We will go on into tomorrow, mind you, taking up 5 hours of time that could be dedicated to coming together around job creation.

The underlying premise of this bill, Mr. Speaker, is that two-thirds of this body, two-thirds of the other body, and three-quarters of the States must consent to a balanced budget amendment. Thank goodness that our Founding Fa-

thers made amending the Constitution so difficult. And that is because they wanted us to be thoughtful. So when we think of the amendments that are in this book, this little book that starts off with "We, the people," a part of the Declaration of Independence, and then the beginning part of the Constitution says that we have come together "to form a more perfect union," they've made it that challenging so that we could be thoughtful in our moving amendments.

Maybe for those of us who are in certain types of church families, whether it be Baptist or the underlying over-riding general Protestant structure, we know that there are pastors, ministers, reverends, board of trustees, a board, or maybe a deacon board, there is some sort of policy board, and then there is a congregation. The reason why I mentioned the faith community is because we can get very sensitive about how our places of worship are run, how the business part of it is run. And you would wonder how many congregations would welcome the overlay of some outside entity—albeit formed by members—that was over the pastor, that was over the board of trustees, that was over the congregation. That's what we have done and forced ourselves to do with the intervening supercommittee that was put together by the concept of needing to raise the debt ceiling and then adding into it another hot pepper pot, and that is, of course, having to be forced to pass a balanced budget amendment.

I want to refer my colleagues again to a headline in a local paper, SHEILA JACKSON LEE can't slow down the Republican balanced-budget amendment freight train. It's not necessarily because it was my name, but that's just what we have experienced, a freight train.

I have no doubt that there will be a strong vote tomorrow. I am hoping that the debate will generate enough thought to cause many of my colleagues to reflect on whether or not we could, in the regular order, do some of the suggestions that have been made. Taxation of investment transactions, where many who are well vested and who have experienced the bounty of this land would be willing to contribute and to understand how we should move forward. The expiration of the Bush tax cuts, another revenue-generator that would, I believe, increase the opportunities for reducing the debt. Getting rid of the mighty, if you will, bungled opportunity to help seniors, becoming a gigantic handout budgetary fiasco. Medicare part D—ask every senior when you visit them at their senior centers, are they begging for the closing of the doughnut hole? But more importantly, are they trying to get relief from Medicare part D? Give them relief, close the doughnut hole, and you will find a huge amount of money going into the Treasury.